CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE CAUSES OF

THE PRESENT STAGNATION

OF

MATRIMONY,

Under the following Heads.

I.
The unreaſonable Degree of Influence and Authority which moſt Parents exerciſe over their Children in the Concern of Marriage.

II.
The high and elegant Education that is given to Young Women beyond the Compaſs of their Fortunes and Stations of Life.

III.
The Debauchery and Extravagance of Young Men.

IV.
The general luxurious and expenſive Taſte of the Times.

ALL WHICH ARE EVILS, THAT SEEM TO CALL FOR THE ATTENTION OF PARLIAMENT.

Fœcunda culpæ ſecula nuptias
Primum inquinavere, & genus, & domos:
Hoc fonte derivata clades
In patriam populoſque fluxit.

Horat. Lib. iii. Od. vi.

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TO

THE READER.

IT is uſual with authors to make many apologies for the appearance of their eſſays in print. They often tell you, either that their thoughts were haſtily thrown together on the ſubject, without their having had an opportunity of reviſing and correcting them; or that they wrote in a bad ſtate of health, when they were but ill qualified for the taſk. Now, as theſe are indeed very good reaſons for ſuppreſſing a work, but are very inſufficient vindications of it after it has once

made its appearance in the world, I ſhall only obſerve, that if what I have written meets with the approbation of my readers, no excuſe need be given for the publication of it; and if it doth not, I am afraid none will be admitted. It hath been my aim rather to admoniſh, than to inſtruct; for, though I am not of the ſame opinion with thoſe philoſophers who held, that all knowledge was only reminiſcence, yet I cannot but think, that to remind men of their duty is the moſt profitable part of inſtruction. *Know thyſelf*, is a great and uſeful precept: and it is ſurely a laudable attempt to call forth the reaſon and underſtandings of men into action, which might otherwiſe lie (like the miſer's hoard) dormant and

and inactive, and be alike uſeleſs to the poſſeſſors themſelves, and to their fellow creatures.

But ſhould there be any thing in the following ſheets, that may anyways ſeem to derogate from the juſt and legal authority of parents, or to leſſen the rational obedience that is due on the part of children, I ſincerely wiſh it unſaid; as my only aim is

Quod verum atque decens.

Hor.

οὔτ' ἂν σιωπήσαιμι τήνδ' ἄτην ὁρῶν
στείχουσαν ἀϛοῖς ἀντὶ τῆς σωτήριας.

Soph. Antig.

Should there be any reflexions on the women, that may ſound too harſh

harſh and ſevere; it is to be obſerved, that I ſpeak only of the vain and ſilly part of the ſex; and that the faults even of theſe are principally chargeable on their education; and that it muſt be confeſſed, that there is ſomething in the nature of woman, which, with all her failings and imperfections, will ever make her pleaſing and amiable in the eyes of man.

There is very little occaſion for making an apology to the men for any ſeverities that may be thrown out againſt them, as they have learned the art of laughing at their own follies, and are ready to join the cry that is raiſed againſt their own vices.

As

As to the nation in general, I ſhall only obſerve, that *defendit numerus:* its back is broad enough, and the multitude of its follies and its crimes is ſufficient to warrant almoſt any cenſure: the fear is only, leſt it ſhould be hardened beyond the power of correction and amendment.

CONSIDERATIONS

On the Cauſes of the preſent Stagnation of

MATRIMONY, &c.

THE care and diſpoſal of the female part of the world, hath in all times been a great and heavy charge upon parents; which made Solomon, in his wiſdom, give this ſtriking admonition to them: *Haſt thou daughters? have a care of their body: marry thy daughter, and ſo thou ſhalt have performed a weighty matter.**

A weighty matter indeed it may be, but it is ſurely no very eaſy one, for the parents of this age to diſpoſe of their daughters in marriage. Now, as the preſent Stagnation of Matrimony is an evil which no true lover of his

* Eccleſiaſticus, Ch. vii. ver. 24. and 25.

country can ſee without the greateſt ſorrow and concern; as it is big with the ſaddeſt conſequences, and forebodes the miſery of individuals, the diſtreſs of families, and the general ruin of the nation; it may be worth the pains to ſearch out the cauſes of it, that, if it be poſſible, a remedy may be applied in due time, before the diſeaſe becomes incurable.

In the firſt place, let us conſider the nature of that authority and reſtraint which parents exerciſe over their children in the concern of marriage.

This preſent world is the only ſcene of matrimonial connexions: for we are fully aſſured, that *in Heaven they neither marry, nor are given in marriage*, Mark xii. 5. And therefore *Be fruitful and multiply*, (Geneſis i. 28.) was the expreſs command of God to our great anceſtors; a command, to which mutual inclinations would always prompt the different ſexes to pay a due obedience, did not the pride of life, and the bias of education, introduce ſordid motives, and ſelfiſh views, to reſiſt the impulſe of Nature, and counteract the deſigns of Providence. Love is ſtyled the nobleſt paſſion of the ſoul, and hath been defined a diſintereſted paſſion; but the uſual definition that parents give of it, is intereſt. The grand queſtion concerning the *ſummum bonum*, or chief

chief happineſs of life, which ſo much divided and perplexed the ancient philoſophers, they have now for ever decided; and have at length found out, that the whole of the ſubject, which hath been branched out into ſo many copious and laboured ſyſtems, is compriſed within the narrow compaſs of the ſingle word, Wealth: and accordingly the language of parents to their children on the ſubject of matrimony, is

Quærenda pecunia primùm.—HOR.

and unleſs they can place them in ſuch ſituations as to make them the objects of their own pride and vanity, they invert the maxim of St. Paul, and *think it better for them to burn, than to marry*; thus ſhutting their ears againſt the call of Nature, and making the very command of God himſelf of none effect through their ambition. Nay! they can even bear to ſee their children pine and languiſh away under the pains of debarred affections; not conſidering, that he who keepeth his child in a ſtate of miſery to gratify his pride, hath as little humanity as he who knocks its brains out to gratify his anger or revenge. To do as we would be done by, is a fundamental rule of religion; and it is alſo the beſt maxim for common life: and if we would form a true judgement of the nature of other men's happineſs, we ſhould place ourſelves in their circumſtances; happineſs being

merely of a relative nature, and arising from certain objects being suited to our several and particular dispositions: whence we often find, that one and the same thing is an instrument of happiness to one man, and of pain to another. It is owing to a neglect of the above-mentioned maxim, that parents are so self-interested in the disposal of their children in marriage: they act as if they themselves were the persons principally concerned, and weigh their children's happiness in the scale of their own inclinations: whereas the children find, that though parents may make contracts and form engagements for them, yet they themselves must endure the consequences: nor is it in the power of any parent to make a recompence to its child for the miseries and sufferings of an unhappy marriage.

But perhaps it will be said, that young people are apt to be led chiefly by fancy, and that therefore the parents, from their greater experience of the world, are better able to choose for them. But, however imperfect and deceitful the guidance of fancy may be esteemed, yet it will be found to have a very leading and prevailing sway over man's happiness; which seems principally seated in the imagination, and in the freedom of choice; as Dr. King observes in his ingenious and learned essay on the Origin of Evil. Nay, he asserts, that choice can in a manner

convert

convert natural evil into good, and make men even pleaſed with death and danger, and prefer them to life and ſecurity: as may be learnt from many inſtances of heroes and martyrs, who have ſmiled at the drawn dagger, rejoiced in the midſt of flames and tortures, and made their ſufferings their glory. What great trouble and uneaſineſs often ſprings from the moſt trivial loſſes and diſappointments! How many women have been thrown into fits, and have almoſt broken their hearts, about matters which had nothing elſe to recommend them, but the ſingle circumſtance of their having ſet their hearts upon them! In ſuch caſes the pleaſure or uneaſineſs, happineſs or diſappointment, cannot ariſe from the things themſelves, but is merely the effect of choice; which, if it can make circumſtances of happineſs even of the moſt trivial and indifferent things, muſt, no doubt, have the moſt powerful influence in the great concern of marriage, which (as the Spectator obſerves) is often either a heaven, or a hell, for life.

Now that happineſs depends on the choice and inclination, it is not only evident from common experience and obſervation; but the reaſon and neceſſity of its being ſo is likewiſe plain and obvious.

God, in the wiſdom of his providence, hath implanted different paſſions and appetites in different

ferent men, that by their making choice of ſeparate objects, and purſuing various means of happineſs, they might be led to fill thoſe ſeveral diſtinct characters and ſtations, which are ſo eſſential to the order and government of the world: and, agreeably to this principle, we find that different men do make choice of different conditions and circumſtances of life: ſome aſpire to climb the ſteep aſcents of ambition, whilſt others prefer the humble and peaceful vales: ſome place their happineſs in living amidſt the noiſe and buſtle of the world; and ſome, in ſolitude and retirement: ſome make wealth and grandeur the objects of their purſuits; and others go not beyond the bounds of moderation and contentment: ſome ſeek reputation even in the cannon's mouth; whilſt others, of Falſtaff's more pacific turn, coolly reflect, that honour cannot ſet a leg: nay, there are ſome men mere volunteers in danger, who freely commit themſelves to the mercy of the winds and waves, and ranſack the globe on no other errand than the culling of ſimples; whilſt others think a ſnug retreat on *terra firma* a much calmer, and more quiet plan: hence the due ſubordination of mankind is preſerved, and the various conditions and departments of life are filled. In like manner the different taſtes and fancies of men prompt them to fix on different parts and ſituations for building their reſpective habitations; by which means

means they ſpread themſelves over the face of the earth, improving and adorning the ſeveral ſcenes with a variety of beautiful dwellings, and rich and pleaſing proſpects: and thus the different cities, towns, villages, nay, even the wildeſt and moſt recluſe parts of a kingdom, are choſen by certain perſons as the places of their reſidence. Now if happineſs (the common and general aim of all mankind) was annexed to any particular worldly poſſeſſion or enjoyment, inſtead of being the reſult of each man's choice and inclination, the deſires of every one would be bent and directed towards the purſuit of the ſame objects: and as there could not be a ſufficiency thereof, only a very ſmall part of mankind could be made happy in the attainment of their wiſhes, and the reſt would be left in a ſtate of miſery and diſappointment: and then all thoſe various powers and faculties of men, which are now ſo buſily employed in the purſuit of happineſs through ſo many different ways, would have nothing to call them forth into action, no end in view to give them chace.

But the wiſdom of providence hath founded happineſs upon the free principle of choice and inclination. Thus it is made the general privilege of all mankind; and, like the ſun, will ſhine on every one, who doth not ſtand in his own light: nay, it ſo far reſembles even the omni-

preſence

preſence of the Deity, that it is not confined within any boundaries or limits, nor excluded from any place whatever.

——— *eſt hic,*
Eſt ulubris.——Hor.

Fixt to no ſpot is happineſs ſincere;
'Tis no where to be found, or every where.—Pope.

And it is ſo much in the power of the man himſelf, that we may ſay with Salluſt,

Suæ quiſque fortunæ faber eſt.

Order is heav'n's firſt law; and this confeſt,
Some are, and muſt be, greater than the reſt;
More rich, more wiſe: but who infers from hence,
That ſuch are happier, ſhocks all common ſenſe.
If then to all men happineſs was meant,
God in externals could not place content.
Pope's Eſſay on Man, Epiſ. iv.

The great aim of God in the creation of man, was man's happineſs; and as a parent (next to Almighty God) may be deemed as it were the creator of its offspring, the higheſt and trueſt aim of parents is the happineſs of their children, unleſs they will prefer the pride and faſhion of the world to the example of their Creator; and chooſe to ſerve Mammon as their maſter and teacher, rather than their God. But the misfortune is, that though parents talk

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of the happineſs of their children in the concern of marriage, yet they often uſe it only as a cloak or pretence, under which they may enjoy the gratification of their own pride: and to make a ſon or a daughter happy by breaking its heart, though it is the wildeſt paradox in reaſon, is yet a common, and almoſt an eſtabliſhed maxim in the practice of the world; for we frequently ſee parents, as it were, offering up their children to the worſt of men, for the ſake of their riches, and imitating that heatheniſh and inhuman practice of *ſacrificing their daughters unto devils.**

Moreover, how few parents have a true and diſintereſted regard for the happineſs of their children, may be ſeen from the frequent inſtances of their diſinheriting them, and refuſing evermore to ſee their faces, only for one ſingle act of diſobedience in marrying againſt their approbation; though it ſeems to be a caſe, wherein a child hath a natural right of choice, and of free agency: but it is as much againſt nature for parents to caſt off their children, as it is againſt reaſon for them to pretend that they have any real concern for their welfare and happineſs, when they do their utmoſt to render them deſtitute and miſerable. *Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? or can he*

 that

* Pſalm cxvi. ver. 37.

that begetteth, hate that which is begotten of him?† But parents often remember only the name and authority, and forget and neglect the duties of their alliance; nay, they ſometimes learn ſo far to counteract the feelings of nature, and to ſuppreſs every tender motion and impulſe of their hearts, that they become the bittereſt enemies to their own children.

There have been ſeveral inſtances of parents, who have not only caſt off their children for marrying without their approbation, but have alſo rendered their lives ſo inſupportable by every inſtance of cruelty and unkindneſs, that they have ſought death as a refuge from parental ſeverity and oppreſſion. But, as ſuch caſes do of themſelves ſpeak home to the minds of thoſe parents, they need not be enlarged upon: it would be cruel to inſult their miſery; and to attempt to raiſe in their hearts any anguiſh and remorſe that they have not hitherto felt, would be a preſumptuous invaſion on the province of conſcience, and laying a neglect of duty to its charge.

Leave them to Heav'n,
And to thoſe thorns, that in their boſoms lodge,
To prick and ſting them.
Shakeſpeare—Hamlet.

Indeed, one would be apt to think that the feelings of nature, and a ſenſe of duty, would prompt parents

† Iſaiah xlix. ver. 15.

parents to give relief and assistance to an unfortunate child, who, by making a wrong and injudicious choice, may have acted against its own interest and happiness: and so we find they do in most other cases; sickness or infirmities, the loss of senses or of limbs, awaken a parental care and tenderness: but when it is a case of disappointed pride, nature pleads in vain; every help and support is withdrawn; and the wound is left to fester, and to mortify.

The Gospel enjoins us even to love our enemies, and to do good to them that spitefully treat us: but it is much to be feared, that they will hardly arrive at the refined morality of loving their enemies, who can even hate and persecute their own children: and when they find, that by having made a false step, they are going down hill in the world, all the regard they shew for them is to give them a kick, and send them to the bottom. Nay, in such instances, it doth not seem to be the disobedience of children that gives such high offence to parents, but the defeating those high and ambitious views, which their parents had entertained for them; for I believe that no one ever was, or ever will be, disinherited for marrying well, (as it is called) though the step were taken without the knowledge or consent of parents. It may even be questioned, how far parents have a right in conscience to cast off their children,

ſince to bring them into the world, and make no proviſion for them, when we have it in our power, ſeems quite oppoſite to the courſe of nature, and irreconcileable to the dictates of reaſon; and the diſinheriting of children is eſteemed a thing ſo deſperate and unnatural, that it hath often been thought a ſufficient ground for deeming a man *Non compos mentis*; and the very term Diſinheriſon ſeems to imply an infringement upon the law of nature, as it is robbing them of that to which they have a kind of natural right and heirdom. And St. Paul tells us, *That if any provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel.*‡

Children are indeed the gift of God; but they are given to man under certain limitations and conditions: they are not born, as ſome parents ſeem to imagine, merely to pleaſe their humours, and to be ſubſervient to their pride and vanity; but, as I mentioned above, that they might enjoy themſelves, and become happy creatures: and every one hath both a right to purſue his own happineſs, and is led by the law of nature to do ſo. Happineſs, it hath been ſhewn, depends principally upon the freedom of choice and inclination; and therefore every man who beſt knows the ſtate of his own mind, and the affections of his heart, can beſt judge of the requiſites of his own happineſs; and the

‡ 1ſt Epiſtle to Timothy, ch. v. ver. 8.

the reaſon why we cannot form a true and perfect judgement of the happy or unhappy condition of other men, is, becauſe we cannot look into their hearts, and diſcern their ſecret thoughts and affections.

Nature (or rather God, who acts through her operations) hath wiſely provided for the happineſs of all other creatures, by ſetting them at liberty from the care and government of the dam, when they are come to maturity, after having had a due proviſion made for them in their infant and helpleſs ſtate: and what God and Nature teach, it can never be beneath man to learn. The law hath likewiſe thought fit to fix a time when young people ſhould be ſet at liberty, and left to their own diſpoſal; and it ſeems ſomewhat ſtrange, that an expedient, calculated for ſuch good and happy purpoſes, and which hath had the ſanction and approbation of the whole nation in general, ſhould not be applied, in its uſe and intent, by individuals, in the conduct of their families: and I need not ſay, that when any man ſets up his private opinion againſt the ſenſe and judgement of an whole nation, he muſt be actuated by prejudice, or ſome other unreaſonable motive.

The eccleſiaſtical law, through particular tenderneſs to the liberty of children in the caſe of marriage, alloweth a young man to contract matrimony

at

at the age of fourteen years, and a young woman at the age of twelve; permitting them to make a contract for the diſpoſal of themſelves at that early time, when no other act or deed of theirs would be valid, except a bargain for the neceſſaries of life. Nay, ſo ſtudious is the law to protect the liberty of children in the caſe of matrimony, that even the Marriage Act, 26 George II. (though moſt induſtriouſly calculated in many reſpects to defeat the natural right of choice, and free agency) hath yet provided a mode of relief in ſome oppreſſive caſes; and hath ordained, that, where a mother, or guardians of a child, ſhall unreaſonably withhold their conſent to a match propoſed, ſuch child may petition the Lord Chancellor, who, if he ſeeth fit, is impowered to proceed in a ſummary way, and may order the parties to be joined together in matrimony, notwithſtanding the diſſent of ſuch mother or guardians; and the ſaid marriage ſhall be equally valid, as if the joint conſent of them all had been obtained. But

Quid leges ſine moribus
Vanae proficiunt?

Horace, Lib. iii. Ode 24.

For parents uſually avail themſelves of that influence and authority, which they have over their children on account of their dependence for fortune and ſubſiſtence, to defeat both the inclinations of nature, and the good deſigns of law; and often keep

keep their daughters in a ſtate of infant ſubjection after they are come to years of maturity and diſcretion. And that they may ſecure this point the more effectually, they lay it down as a maxim, that it is highly improper, and unbecoming, either in any man to make any ſort of advances to their daughter, or for the daughter to receive them without their permiſſion, and until the parties have a regular commiſſion to be in love with each other: thus robbing them of every opportunity of having any evidence of their bearing a real and diſintereſted regard towards one another; which is the true foundation of happineſs in the married ſtate: for the purpoſe of moſt parents being to ſell, or (to uſe a ſofter, and more common phraſe) to diſpoſe of their daughters to the beſt advantage; they deem it the higheſt preſumption for them to dare to have any feelings or affections of their own, or to think of diſpoſing of themſelves, notwithſtanding both law and reaſon have given them that privilege. The conduct of parents in this reſpect is ſo glaring, that we need ſeldom be at a loſs to gueſs at the fortunes which they can give their daughters, from their manner of treating them. If they can give them but little, they permit them to uſe the greater liberty and familiarity with young men, in hopes that their dreſs and beauty may make their fortune: but if they can give them handſome portions, they

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are exceedingly cautious that none but men of ſubſtance ſhould be introduced to them: and though they will ſtudy to draw in young men of fortune by every artifice of invitation and complaiſance, yet, if any perſon of inferior ſtation ſhould preſume to act the like part by them, and make overtures to their daughter, he is inſtantly called an impudent fellow; he is forbid the houſe, and it is well if his diſmiſſion be not accompanied with the forbidding circumſtance of his being kicked out of doors. But as ſoon as any man offers himſelf, whoſe fortune is ſufficient to warrant his claim, the poor girl is immediately conſigned over to him, without further queſtions being aſked; and is carried away from her father's to her huſband's houſe, as a priſoner is removed by a writ of *Habeas corpus* from one gaol to another. Moliere, in his *L'Amour Medicine*, hath touched this ſubject very forcibly in the following words, which he hath put into the mouth of one of theſe ſelfiſh mercenary parents. *A-t on jamais rien vu de plus impertinent, & de plus ridicule, que d'amaſſer du bien avec des grands travaux, & élever une fille avec beaucoup de ſoin, & de tendreſſe, pour ſe dépouiller de l'un, et de l'autre, entre les mains d'un homme qui ne nous touche ne rien? Non, non, je me moque de cèt uſage; et je veux garder mon bien, et ma fille, pour moi.*

Now, as parents are ſo much inclined to make the marriage

marriage of their daughters a matter of bargain and ſale, it might be convenient for their purpoſe, if there were certain auctions of women appointed by authority, and catalogues of the ſeveral lots diſtributed abroad, with the proper conditions of ſale annexed; as that the higheſt bidder ſhould be the buyer, &c. Or, ſince the Smithfield bargain§ is ſo much inſiſted on by parents, (and the term itſelf is borrowed from the market that bears that name) it might not be amiſs if proper pens were provided in Smithfield, and certain days fixed, whereon they might bring their daughters to market; that if a man, after having viewed them, ſhould be inclined to bid money for any one, he might have nothing more to do, than to aſk the proprietor his price; and, if they could agree, the purchaſe money might be paid down immediately: and thus the matter might be ſettled at once, without either the law's delay, or the formality of addreſs and application: and one cannot but think, that it would contribute very much to the pleaſure of travelling, and would furniſh many entertaining ſcenes upon the road, to ſee the ſeveral fathers driving up their daughters to market, like ſo many flocks of geeſe or turkies: and it is moreover very probable, that many of them might be diſpoſed of in this public

 way,

§ A Smithfield bargain hath uſually been underſtood to mean, that the man ſhould have double the woman's fortune.

way, which are at preſent cooped up for private ſale to no purpoſe.

God made man upright, we are told, *but he hath ſought out many inventions*. And pride is, of all his inventions, the boldeſt, and the fartheſt fetched: it is that *tower of Babel*, againſt which Heaven doth always aim confuſion and deſtruction. How many families have been made unhappy, either by the debauch of a daughter, or by her deſperate marriage to ſome inferior perſon; who might have been ſettled in the world with comfort and happineſs, had her parents liſtened to reaſon, inſtead of pride, and paid attention to the inclinations of their child, and to ſuitable propoſals! How many women, whom the pride of their parents hath doomed to paſs the flower of their age in a ſtate of virginity, ſtill hang upon their hands, to poiſon the enjoyment of their latter days with conſtant peeviſhneſs, and diſcontent at their ſituation; and to bring their grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave! But we cannot well wonder that pride, which makes man ſo often forget his Creator, ſhould make him in like manner forget himſelf, and neglect his duty to his children. But let parents remember, that, though the pride and faſhion of the world may at preſent divert them from a right ſenſe of things, yet, in the decline of life, there muſt be many vacant ſolitary hours, when reflection will break in upon them, and reproach them with the wilful

wilful contempt of their duty, and the neglect of their children's welfare and happineſs; when it will point out to them ſome daughter waſted with miſery, whom they have ſacrificed to the painful pre-eminence of being the wife of ſome rich tyrant, or whom they have kept in a ſingle ſtate to gratify their own inclinations, and have doomed to bear the pangs of diſappointed love, and to become the prey of debarred affections.

I ſhall obſerve on the other hand, that the care and education which is beſtowed upon their offſpring by good parents, who are influenced by a ſenſe of duty, as well as natural inſtinct, and conſult the welfare and happineſs of their children, rather than any ſelfiſh motives of their own, is, next to the protection of Providence, the greateſt bleſſing that any one can enjoy here on earth, and demands ſuitable returns of duty and gratitude. But parents ſhould examine well their own hearts, leſt they miſtake ſelf-love for a true and diſintereſted affection for their children; and when they are perſuading a daughter to be married to her *coach* and *her country houſe*,* I wiſh they would aſk themſelves

 whether

* It is a common expreſſion, that ſuch a lady is married to her coach, or her country houſe, without mention being made of the man; the huſband himſelf, and his character or diſpoſition, being things too inconſiderable to be made the object of any notice or regard.

whether they do not aim rather to pleaſe themſelves, and to flatter their own pride, than to gratify the inclinations, and promote the real happineſs, of their daughter: and, if upon examination they find this to be the caſe, I would recommend it to them to give their vanity a different turn, and to purchaſe a new coach, or a rich piece of plate, which may perhaps ſerve the purpoſe, and reſcue them from an irrational act, which (if they ſhould hereafter come to the uſe of reaſon and reflection) might make the remainder of their lives miſerable.

God himſelf hath not commanded man to obey him without the promiſe of reward, and hath fully aſſured him, that if he ſhould ſuffer through his obedience, he ſhall receive the ampleſt recompence. And if parents could inſure their children from any bad conſequences, or could make amends to them for what they may ſuffer by marrying according to their will and injunction, they might with better colour of reaſon demand obedience. But what recompence they can make to that child, whom they have either compelled to an unhappy marriage, or withheld from an happy one, it is, I believe, beyond the reach of human wiſdom to deviſe.

And therefore perſons, who are above ſuffering themſelves to be blindly led by cuſtom and example,

and

and dare think for themſelves, will be apt to ſuſpect, that children were not born merely to be ſlaves to the will of their parents, or inſtruments of their vanity; and that they are not under the obligation of giving up all the comfort and happineſs of their lives at the command of a father or mother, or of making ſuch a ſacrifice of themſelves, as, though it may be ſport to the parents, is death, or worſe than death, to their children.

The ſenſible and judicious Mr. Addiſon thought, that the authority of a parent ſhould accommodate itſelf to the liberty of a free-born Engliſh woman; that parents are bound to provide for the natural and juſt paſſions of their children when grown up, as well as food and raiment in their tender years; and that reaſon and duty ſhould oblige them to comply with the inclinations of their children, when there is a proſpect of their marrying with comfort and happineſs to themſelves, though they may be inclined to place themſelves in ſituations inferior to thoſe which the vain wiſhes, and ambitious views of their parents had planned out for them.

How far honour and reverence to thoſe, who, next to God, are the authors of our being; how far duty and gratitude ſhould carry us, it is a nice point to determine—it is certain they ſhould have

have great weight. I would therefore rather recommend it to parents, to ſtudy to coincide with the inclinations of their children, than prompt children to diſobey their parents. By ſuch juſt and liberal conduct, the parents would never be a burthen to their children; nor, of what extent ſoever might be the date of their lives, could they be duely thought to have lived one hour too long.

I ſhall now ſpeak of that elegant and expenſive kind of education, that is given to moſt young women of the preſent age.

It is a common maxim with many parents, to give their daughters, what they falſely call, a Good Education, to make them amends for the want of fortune; which is juſt as rational, as it would be for them to adminiſter bitters to whet their children's appetites, under the notion, that a keen ſtomach will ſupply the want of food: for we find, that it ſerves only to give them a taſte for miſery, by raiſing their views beyond the reach of that happineſs which belongs to their ſtation and character of life.

Now, ſince marriage is almoſt the only ſtate for which women ſeem deſigned; and ſince (as the Spectator obſerves) the conſideration of getting a huſband is made the prevailing motive

to

to induce Miſs to go through the labour and pains of her education with chearfulneſs; I look upon our great female boarding-ſchools as ſo many ſeminaries of candidates for matrimony; and cannot but reflect, with the higheſt pity and concern, how few there are, amidſt ſuch multitudes, whoſe expenſive and elegant accompliſhments are likely to turn to any account, or to anſwer the end of their own wiſhes, or their parents cares. Nor do I think, that a home education is leſs liable to lead them aſtray from a right ſenſe of things, ſince, in moſt caſes, they muſt unavoidably receive ſo many wrong impreſſions from the vanity and diſſipation of their parents, and from the affected and pragmatical behaviour of their maſters. Indeed, as the chief capacity for which women ſeem deſigned, is matrimony, one would expect that their education ſhould be ſuch, as would beſt qualify them for that ſtate, to which they are principally adapted: one would expect to hear mothers inſtilling into their daughters maxims of prudence and œconomy, inſtead of giving them a taſte for expence and ſhow; and informing their underſtandings, and correcting their hearts, inſtead of employing all their labours on the beauty of their faces, or the geſture of their bodies; and teaching them the thin and tranſparent artifices of allurement and captivation: one would think it reaſonable, that they ſhould explain to them

them the weak and defenceleſs ſtate of their ſex, and inculcate the neceſſity of their making choice of a man, to whom they could willingly and ſafely entruſt themſelves in marriage; which, though parents uſually make it a matter of bargain and ſale, is to the daughters themſelves a ſolemn engagement, wherein every thing that is dear and valuable to them is concerned; a contract for life, and a ſurrender of themſelves, and of their comfort and happineſs, into the power and controul of their huſbands. But parents ſeldom take much pains to inform the underſtandings of their daughters: nay, they often beſtow more labour to make them vain and fooliſh, than, if rightly employed, would make them wiſe and uſeful characters. The books they read, however well calculated for information and improvement, can have but little influence on them, whilſt all their wiſe inſtructions on a ſimplicity of manners, and an unaffected behaviour, all their excellent leſſons on a generous and diſintereſted conduct, are often defeated by that diſguiſe and artifice, which, it is much to be lamented, are uſually the very eſſence of female education.

And, as it is deemed the higheſt degree of preſumption, for a girl to entertain any ſentiments or affections of her own; all her thoughts, words, and actions, are to be regulated only by the mother's

ther's nod; which ſtate of reſtraint renders her whole carriage and behaviour ſo cold and unanimated, and is ſuch a powerful check to every generous principle of nature, that ſhe looks more like *a doll*, than a rational creature, or at beſt is only

Nervis alienis mobile lignum.—HOR.

Hence many a poor girl comes to church to be married, without having any juſt ideas of the nature of matrimony. *She is brought as an ox to the ſlaughter, or as a bird haſteth to the ſnare of the fowler, not knowing that it is for its life;** and thus is doomed to the baſeſt proſtitution both of herſelf, and of the holy rites of matrimony, by giving her hand to a man, whilſt her heart is far from him; and, by vowing love and reverence to him whom ſhe hates and deſpiſes, ſhe lays herſelf open to the guilt of perjury, and the ſin of violating the moſt ſacred bonds and obligations. But were the true ſtate of matrimony laid before her, with all its hazards, one may be apt to think, that ſhe would ſtart back even from the very altar itſelf; and entertain a thouſand fears, and miſgivings of mind, to which ſhe had hitherto been an utter ſtranger: and inſtead of deeming marriage only a means of advancing herſelf in the world, and of gaining

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* Proverbs vii. ver. 22.

the management of an houſe and an huſband, (as ſhe had before been taught to think) ſhe would find herſelf to be the ſlave, and dependent only on the affection of her huſband for her peace and her liberty.*

Any

* I would not in any reſpect be thought to arraign that high degree of power which is lodged in the huſband by nature, law, and goſpel; ſince it is ſo fully balanced by the predominant affection of the huſband; and which we find often operates ſo ſtrongly, as to throw the main controul and authority into the female ſcale.

Hence that numerous and reſpectable body of men, known by the name of the Hen-pecked, as well amongſt the renowned heroes, and mighty warriors of antiquity, as amongſt many modern private and public characters. Women indeed are apt to look upon this their influence as the effect of their own ſuperior wiſdom or courage, rather than the reſult of the natural affection of their huſbands; and often demand that obedience with the claim of authority, which love and fondneſs would yield with pleaſure of their own accord: for the great Creator hath wiſely implanted in the ſuperior creature a ſuperior degree of affection towards inferior and dependent creatures, as the only means of their ſecurity and protection. Hence ariſes our regard and tenderneſs towards children, and towards the inferior parts of the creation: hence the fierceneſs of males in defence of their females. But perhaps the caſe will appear in a ſtronger light, from the inſtance of the cock, who ſcarce ever ventures to make a meal without

firſt

Any one, who looks at all abroad into the world, may eaſily obſerve, that the aim of moſt parents, in the education which they give to their daughters, is to convert their other natural

 paſſions

firſt giving the moſt gracious invitation to his hens, who very politely and graciouſly come and eat up all from him, whilſt he ſtands by as a mere looker-on: or, if he ſhould preſume to pick up a ſcattered grain or two, he ſeldom eſcapes without having them ſnatched out of his mouth.

Milton hath given us the ſtrongeſt and moſt beautiful repreſentation of the influence of man's affection towards woman, in the deſcription which Adam makes of Eve to Raphael.

—Well I underſtand, in the prime end
Of Nature, her the inferior in the mind
And inward faculties, which moſt excell;
In outward alſo, her reſembling leſs
His image who made both; and leſs expreſſing
The character of that dominion giv'n
O'er other creatures: yet when I approach
Her lovelineſs, ſo abſolute ſhe ſeems,
And in herſelf complete, ſo well to know
Her own, that what ſhe wills to do or ſay,
Seems wiſeſt, virtuouſeſt, diſcreeteſt, beſt:
All higher knowledge in her preſence falls
Degraded: Wiſdom, in diſcourſe with her,
Loſes diſcountenanc'd, and like Folly ſhews;
Authority and reaſon on her wait.

Paradiſe Loſt, Book viii.

paſſions into pride, as a ſecurity againſt their throwing themſelves away upon ſome *worthleſs fellow*; as is every man, in their eſtimation, who is not worth a good round ſum of money, or a handſome eſtate: and, conſiſtently with this plan, we find them inſtructing their daughters in the diſcipline of ſetting their caps at men, on account of their external circumſtances, and teaching them to *marry the houſe*, or the fortune, and not the man, as was obſerved above. Indeed, were we not otherwiſe informed by ſuch good authority, we might be apt to think, that the character, temper, and diſpoſition, of a man, were material conſiderations to a poor girl, whoſe comfort and happineſs muſt entirely depend upon them; when, by marrying, ſhe gives to her huſband almoſt every power over her, but that of life and death; and, if unkindly or injuriouſly treated, hath no other defence, but ſubmiſſion; no other reſource or conſolation, but ſighs and tears.

Moliere hath given us a very ſtrong and forcible deſcription of the ſtate of matrimony in his *L'Avare:* he ſays, *Votre fille vous peut repreſenter que le mariage eſt une plus grande affaire qu'on ne peut croire; qu'il y va d'être heureux ou malheureux toute ſa vie; & qu'un engagement, qui doit durer juſqu'à la mort, ne ſe doit jamais faire, qu'avec des*

des grandes precautions; qu'en des telles occaſions l'inclination d'une fille eſt une choſe ſans doute où l'on doit avoir de l'egard; & que la grande inegalité d'âge, d'humeur, & de ſentimens, rend un mariage ſujet à des accidens tres facheux.

Let us now ſee how the conduct and behaviour of women correſponds with their education.

'Tis education forms the common mind;
Juſt as the twig is bent, the tree's inclin'd.
Pope's Moral Eſſays, Epiſt. i.

It cannot be a matter of wonder, that the love of dreſs and ſhow ſhould diſcover itſelf ſo plainly as it does in the common carriage and behaviour of young women, when ſuch principles are inſtilled into them from their earlieſt years, that they may be ſaid to be nurtured in pride, and fed with the milk of vanity. When daughters find that the whole attention of their parents is directed towards their perſons, and to external accompl ſhments, they are apt to think that nothing can be truly valuable, either in themſelves or others, but what belongs to the body, and its various embelliſhments and decorations: and thus they become equally inattentive to mental qualifications, both in their own, and in the male ſex. The outward finery of men ſo dazzles their eyes, that they cannot diſcern their

real

real and inward worth; and a laced coat (like charity) *covers a multitude of ſins.** Nay, many women are ſo wholly engroſſed with the externals of men, that they have no juſt ideas of manly beauty, or of true figure and proportion: coxcombs and pretty fellows are their only handſome perſons; and they become ſo much more the objects of admiration to them, as they are leſs like men, and approach towards effeminacy; for the vainer part of the female world is chiefly pleaſed with mankind when they reſemble themſelves, and (like their looking-glaſſes) reflect their own image. It would indeed be matter of much wonder, that fools and coxcombs ſhould meet with ſo much better reception from many of the fair ſex than men of ſenſe, did we not know, that women (like fortune) often aſſiſt and encourage the bold; and that modeſty and delicacy are the uſual companions of ſenſe and underſtanding. Senſible men are *traders* too conſiderable to retail the *ſmall wares* of nonſenſe and adulation, in which only the others *deal*. In ſhort, fools and coxcombs (like *Falſtaff's troop*, which was *food for powder*, though fit for nothing elſe) are food for women's vanity; which is ſuch a powerful help to the converſation of ſuch men, that they are ſeldom afraid of making even the lameſt compliment to them; knowing that, however it may limp

* 1ſt St. Peter, ch. iv. ver. 8.

limp, yet, if it be but ſomewhat ſhowy, the fair will fancy that it ſtands mighty well upon its legs.

Mr. Pope mentions the love of pleaſure as a leading principle in women; but I believe it is not ſo much a fondneſs for mere amuſements, that carries them to aſſemblies and places of public reſort, as the deſire of laying hold of every opportunity to cath at admiration, and to diſplay their charms. The more admirers they gain, the more ſecure they think themſelves of getting an huſband; and whilſt they keep a number of men in play, they imagine that they can fix their finger upon any one of them, and make him inſtantly their own. This is the foundation of coquetry, and of that general encouragement given by many women to a variety of men: they make it their aim to enſnare their affections, and yet think themſelves at liberty to caſt them off at pleaſure; and to interpret all their artifices and particularities of behaviour, as nothing more than common civility; or to alledge the diſapprobation of parents or friends in their vindication: as if, when they are of a legal age to make engagements for themſelves, the want of conſent from parents or friends was ſufficient to releaſe them from all the obligations of honour and honeſty; or could, with a popiſh power, grant them a diſpenſation for breaking the moſt ſacred ties and contracts. But would ſuch a plea avail them

them in other caſes? Would it acquit them in a court of judicature, when arraigned for offences againſt the law? or, juſtify the breach of their faith and honour to the world at large? How far it may be right for women to give encouragement to men without the approbation of their parents, I do not pretend to determine; but this I think, that when they are come to years of diſcretion, and have a capacity of acting and judging for themſelves, if they have entered into ſuch engagements, (unleſs any very ſolid and unforeſeen objection can be alledged) they are equally bound in honour and conſcience to fulfil them, as they would be bound to perform any other contracts. Nay, the *eccleſiaſtical law* deems even bare encouragement and particularity of behaviour towards a man, binding on the part of a woman; for if they are not accountable for their own conduct, but it is in the power of their parents to invalidate, and make void all their actions, I do not ſee how it is poſſible to have any concern or tranſaction with them, on any grounds of ſecurity. It is ſurely ſafer and better utterly to ſhun their company, than to baſk in ſmiles, that ſerve only to betray, or liſten to *Siren* charms, that at firſt inchant with ſounds of joy and happineſs, but at length diſappoint the ear with harſh and grating notes: for ſo precarious are the favours of ſome of the female ſex; ſo often do they damp their lover's fondeſt hopes, and warmeſt

ex-

expectations with ſudden coldneſs; that, to depend on the ſmiles of ſuch fickle women, as on thoſe of wavering and unſteady princes, we may truly ſay,

This is the ſtate of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow bloſſoms,
And bears his bluſhing honours thick upon him:
The third day comes a froſt, a killing froſt;
And when he thinks, good eaſy man, full ſurely
His happineſs is ripening, nips his root;
And then he falls.

Shakeſpeare's Henry VIII.

We have long been told,

Varium et mutabile ſemper
Fœmina.——Virgil. Æn. iv. 569.

And Horace hath given us a very lively and ſtriking deſcription of the ſudden changes of a woman's humour, in her conduct towards her lover;

Vexat, foribuſque repulſum
Perfundit gelidâ: rurſus vocat.

Horat. Lib. ii. Sat. 7.

repreſenting her as diſcarding him, and turning him out of doors one minute, and the next employing all her artifices of attraction and invitation towards him; thus keeping him in a fluctuating

and diſtracted ſtate, between hopes and fears; and enjoying a cruel ſport, much like that which wanton boys ſhow, during Shrovetide, at their diverſion of throwing at cocks; who, after having almoſt beat and harraſſed them to death, uſe various arts to revive the poor birds, only that they may knock them down again the next minute. Women may indeed endeavour to excuſe this conduct, by ſaying, that they are unwilling to plunge their lovers at once into a ſtate of abſolute deſpair; but they ſhould conſider, that

Una ſalus victis nullam ſperare ſalutem.
Virgil. Æn. ii. 354.

And it is ſurely a falſe and miſtaken indulgence in a phyſician, to give his patient a reviving cordial in his dying hour, only to protract his pains, and lengthen out the agonies of death.

It cannot indeed be matter of wonder, that women ſhould be the objects of admiration to men; or, that mankind ſhould learn the leſſon which God and Nature teach them. There is ſuch a grace in beauty, ſuch dignity and elegance in the perſon and carriage of a fine woman, that one is apt to think a form ſo heavenly is animated by a mind of adequate worth and excellence: nor can we eaſily conceive, that ſo fair and rich a caſe ſhould, inſtead of containing a jewel of high price and value,

value, often bear within it nothing better than a poor and worthleſs bauble.

Nature on her beſtow'd
Too much of ornament; in outward ſhow
Elaborate, of inward leſs exact.
Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, B. viii.

Go to our Theatres; go to a Ranelagh, or Vauxhall; to the Pantheon, or Coterie; and there you may ſee,

A bevy of fair women, richly gay
In wanton dreſs; that ſeem a troop
Of goddeſſes, ſo blithe, ſo ſmooth, ſo gay;
Yet empty of all good, wherein conſiſts
Woman's domeſtic honor, and chief praiſe;
Bred only and completed to the taſte
Of luſtful appetence; to ſing, to dance,
To dreſs, to troll the tongue, and roll the eye.
Milton's Paradiſe Loſt.

The ſeveral artifices, which modern education inſtills into the fair ſex, are likewiſe very ſtrikingly repreſented by Parnell in his poem on the Riſe of Woman.

Her various arts
Of trifling prettily with wounded hearts;
A mind for love, but ſtill a changing mind;
The liſp affected, and the glance deſign'd;

The ſweet confuſing bluſh, the ſecret wink,
The gentle-ſwimming walk, the courteous ſink,
The ſtare for ſtrangeneſs fit, for ſcorn the frown,
For decent yielding looks declining down;
The practis'd languiſh, where well-feign'd deſire
Wou'd own its melting in a mutual fire;
Gay ſmiles to comfort; April ſhowers to move;
And all the nature, all the art of love;
Deep plots and fair excuſes fill her brain,
The views of breaking am'rous vows for gain;
The price of favours; the deſigning arts,
That aim at riches in contempt of hearts.

Theſe ſentiments on the artifices of the female ſex are ſo general, that they have been the ſubject of ſatire to almoſt every author, wherever the courſe of his ſubject hath led him to ſpeak of women. Let us ſee what even that moſt elegant and polite author Metaſtaſio hath written on the ſubject, and in a tongue that may be juſtly ſtyled the language of love and politeneſs.

In the opera of Adriano in Siria, Aquilio ſpeaks thus to Emirena, adviſing her to practiſe all her artifices upon the Emperor,

Un tuo ſoſpiro
Interrotto con arte: un tronco accento
Ch'abbia ſenſi diverſi: un dolce ſguardo

Che

Che ſembri a tuo malgrado
Nel ſuo furto ſorpreſo: un moto, un riſo,
Un ſilenzio, un reſſor, quel che non dici
Farà capir: ſon facili gli amanti
A luſingarſi: e che pur troppo
Voi naſcete maeſtre: d'aver ſul ciglio
Lagrime ubbedienti: aver ſul labbro
Un riſo che non paſſi
A confini del ſen, quando vi piace
Impallidirvi, ed arroſir nel viſo:
Invidiabili ſono
Privilegi del ſeſſo; in dono a voi
Gli ha dati il cielo, e coſtan tanto a noi.

It is ſurely matter of much concern, to reflect that ſuch labour and pains of education ſhould be beſtowed upon them only to deface the beauty of nature, and to varniſh over the ſimplicity of their hearts with deſign and artifice. But theſe female anglers, theſe *fiſhers of men*, throw the line too openly, and in too broad a ſunſhine, to catch any thing: many indeed will be nibbling, but none but ſilly fiſh will gorge the bait: for among all thoſe that croud and hover round them, there are many, I fear, who are lured only by the ſcent of prey, and watch for ſome opportunity to betray them to ruin; and the more ſober part of mankind regard them

them only with a faint and diſtant admiration, or with cold indifference

Look o'er them as a bed of gaudy flowers,
That lift their painted heads, and live a day;
Then ſhed their trifling glories unregarded.

Rowe's Tragedy of Lady Jane Gray.

The pernicious effects of female vanity are repreſented in the moſt beautiful and ſtriking manner in the following language of Holy Writ: *Though thou cloatheſt thyſelf with crimſon; though thou deckeſt thee with ornaments of gold; though thou renteſt thy face with painting; in vain ſhalt thou make thyſelf fair; thy lovers will deſpiſe thee.*

Jeremiah, Ch. iv. ver. 30.

We find alſo from St. Paul, that this female love of dreſs and ſhow prevailed ſtrongly in the early times of the goſpel; and he recommends it to women, to *adorn themſelves with modeſt apparel; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array; but with good works.*

St. Paul's Epiſ. to Tim. ii. 9, 10.

Tully, in his treatiſe on Old Age, tells us, that the only thing, which can make us ſatisfied with this preſent life, is the reflection that we have ſo lived and acted, that by anſwering

anſwering the ends of Providence, we may reaſonably hope, that we have not been born in vain. And, ſince matrimony is the principal capacity for which women are deſigned, and to which they chiefly aſpire as the means of their advancement in the world, a great part of the female ſex muſt be apt to ſuſpect, that they do not anſwer the ends of Providence by living in a ſingle ſtate: nor can they well conceive, that they came into the world on no other errand, but to bloom and wither; and to wander up and down, waſting their ſweetneſs on the deſert air;

Fair to no purpoſe, artful to no end;
Young without lovers, old without a friend.

Pope.

Sophocles, who was a great maſter of Nature, and underſtood her affections very thoroughly, makes Antigone grow ſo very impatient at the thought of quitting the world unmarried, that, in the fullneſs of her heart, ſhe burſts out into lamentations, which may perhaps be thought rather to ſavour of the peeviſhneſs of an old maid: her complaint however certainly expreſſes great feeling, and much earneſtneſs:

I ne'er ſhall taſte the joys of wedlock—never hear the bridal ſong—no—the grave only will be my huſband.———Sophocles Antig.

Having

Having conſidered women in their ſingle ſtate, let us now take a view of them in the ſtate of Matrimony.

Solomon, in the 31ſt chapter of the book of Proverbs, gives us the following character of a good wife, which, even in his days, ſeems to have been a rare thing, by the high value which he ſets upon her. 'Who can find a virtuous 'woman? (ſaith he) for her price is far above 'rubies. The heart of her huſband doth ſafely 'truſt in her: ſhe will do him good, and not 'evil, all the days of her life: ſhe ſeeketh wool 'and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands: 'ſhe layeth her hands to the ſpindle, and her 'hands hold the diſtaff: ſhe looketh well to the 'ways of her houſehold, and eateth not the bread 'of idleneſs: ſhe riſeth while it is yet night, 'giveth meat to her houſehold, and a portion to 'her maidens.'

I will not bear ſo hard upon the age, as to deſcend to the preſent times for a contraſt to the above deſcription, but ſhall content myſelf with taking it as far back as the days of Swift; not doubting, but it will be nevertheleſs ſufficiently ſtrong.

The modern dame is wak'd at noon,
(Some authors ſay, not quite ſo ſoon)
Becauſe,

Becauſe, though ſore againſt her will,
She ſat up all night at Quadrille.
She ſtretches, gapes, unglues her eyes,
And aſks if it be time to riſe:
Of head-ach, and the ſpleen complains;
And then, to cool her heated brains,
Her night-gown and her ſlippers brought her,
Takes a large dram of citron water:
Then to her glaſs; and, "Betty, pray
"Don't I look frightfully to-day?
"But was it not confounded hard?
"Well, if I ever touch another card!
"Four mattadores, and loſe Codill!
"Depend upon't I never will:
"But run to Tom, and bid him fix
"The ladies here to-night by ſix.
Madam, the goldſmith waits below;
He ſays, his buſineſs is to know
If you'll redeem the ſilver cup,
He keeps in pawn? "Why, ſhew him up."
Your dreſſing-plate he'll be content
To take, for intereſt cent. per cent.
And, Madam, there's my Lady Spade
Hath ſent this letter by her maid.
"Well, I remember what ſhe won;
"And hath ſhe ſent ſo ſoon to dun?
"Here, carry down theſe ten piſtoles,
"My huſband left to pay for coals."

Swift's Journal of a Modern Lady.

I believe, whoſoever duely conſiders theſe two different characters, will give the former the preference; and will be apt to think, that handling the ſpindle and diſtaff, and looking to the ways of her houſehold, is a much more innocent and profitable employ, than ſhuffling and cutting of cards; and that the wife, who by her diligence earns money to pay her legal debts, is full as honourable, as ſhe who pays her debts of honour with her tradeſmen's livelihood.

The miſchief is, that the major part of women regard matrimony as a ſtate of liberty; as an inſurance, whereon they may boldly launch out into the follies and pleaſures of the world; and whenever they are ſhipwrecked, or ſuffer damage, their huſbands bear the coſt. Marriage is indeed the cauſe for which they willingly quit father and mother; but they cleave ſo little to their huſbands, that we muſt look for the more faſhionable part of married women, any where rather than at home, and in any other company beſides their huſbands. Indeed, certain times of abſence are proper and allowable:

For ſolitude ſometimes is beſt ſociety;
And ſhort retirement urges ſweet return.
Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, Book ix.

But whatever woman may think, ſhe never appears ſo amiable, as when ſhe exhibits, to the eyes

eyes of others, the pleaſing picture of conjugal affection, and makes the ſociety of her huſband her refuge and protection from the hazards and temptations of the world.

Eve had never been ſeduced to ruin by the tempter, had ſhe but liſtened to this affectionate advice of Adam:

Leave not the faithful ſide
That gave thee being, ſtill ſhades thee and protects.
The wife, where Danger or Diſhonour lurks,
Safeſt and ſeemlieſt by her huſband ſtays.
Paradiſe Loſt, Book ix. ver. 265.

And I think, that it is a caſe both of danger and diſhonour, for married women to be catching at the admiration of other men, by all the arts of dreſs and affectation, inſtead of cultivating the eſteem and affection of their huſbands; and to riſque their own reputation, and deſtroy the peace and happineſs of thoſe whom they have vowed to love and cheriſh, only for the ſake of gratifying an idle hour of vanity. But there is ſcarce any place of public reſort, that will not afford inſtances of handſome wives, who ſtudy to draw the attention of all around them, by their freedom of diſcourſe, and familiarity of behaviour towards ſome men of faſhion and gaiety; thus taking every opportunity of diſplaying their folly, and glorying in their ſhame. They are unwill-

ing to quit their claim to that addreſs and admiration which they received in their ſingle ſtate, and cannot brook the thought of reſigning a croud of lovers, for the ſcanty poſſeſſion of one man: hard conditions indeed, that would contract their ſphere of action to ſuch a narrow ſpan, and make

—All their conqueſts, glories, triumphs, ſpoils,
Shrink to this little meaſure!

Shakeſpeare's Julius Cæſar.

But they are too headſtrong to bear the curb of duty, and have ſo much of original tendency towards tranſgreſſion, that, like their mother Eve, they will be caſting a longing eye at the forbidden fruit; and it is well if they do not taſte it too, unleſs they have ſo much moderation and refinement about them, as to be content only with *committing adultery in their hearts.* Some women of ſpirit, indeed, cannot bear to act on ſo confined a plan; nor are they content only with treſpaſſing in thought and inclination, but live in open adultery: and, as if the world was willing to give all the ſanction it could to ſuch practices, we hear frequent mention made, in converſation, of married perſons being in love with the huſbands and wives of others; and their intrigues are ſpoken of, not only without reſerve, but even with the utmoſt familiarity and pleaſantry; as if marriage was a licence for adultery,

tery, and to be (what that old-faſhioned fellow Cæſar required of his wife) free from the ſuſpicion of guilt, was only a baſe plebeian virtue, beneath the regard of perſons of modern taſte and faſhion.

The dread of ſhame and cenſure (as it is a ſtrong check upon vice) is a powerful ſupport to the cauſe of virtue and morality: but if ſuch crimes are permitted to be openly practiſed, as human nature in its ſimple and uncorrupted ſtate would ſhudder at; if women, who live in avowed adultery, without having modeſty enough for diſſimulation and hypocriſy, receive that countenance and reſpect from the world, which is due only to virtue and decency; if the violation of chaſtity is called only by the gentle name of Indiſcretion, or Imprudence; it is much to be feared that ſuch kind and favourable treatment will give encouragement to vice; and that the elegance and delicacy of the times will ſoften and refine away the principles of virtue. As to extravagance in dreſs and ſhow, as it is not peculiar to women in the married ſtate, otherwiſe than as their opportunities of indulging this paſſion are greater, I ſhall only obſerve, that ſcripture tells them, that it ſhould be their aim to pleaſe their huſbands, rather than the world at large; and that the true ornament of woman *is not the plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel,*

but

but the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit;‡ which is not only of great value in the ſight of God, but is likewiſe ſo highly pleaſing and valuable in the eyes of men, that, could it be purchaſed for their wives, I verily believe that many huſbands would willingly part with all that they have, in exchange for *that pearl of great price.* When one reads of that pure and diſintereſted affection, that our firſt parents bore towards each other in their ſimple and uncorrupted ſtate, one cannot help joining with Milton in the following lamentation:

O! when meet now
Such pairs in love and mutual honour join'd?

And were not the generality of women ſo much more willing to ſee what they are, than what they ſhould be; did they not take ſo much greater pleaſure in caſting their eyes upon their looking-glaſſes, than on any repreſentations of example and inſtruction; I would recommend it to them to look (*veluti in ſpeculum*) into the deſcription which Adam gives of Eve; and if they have not ſeen enough of the world to have loſt all ſenſibility, they muſt bluſh to ſee how much the genuine grace and ſimplicity of nature ſurpaſſes all the refinements of faſhion, all the artificial accompliſhments of modern education.

Behold

‡ 1ſt Epiſt. St. Peter, ch. iii. ver. 3, 4.

Behold her not far off.
Such as I ſaw her in my dream, adorn'd
With what all earth or heaven could beſtow,
To make her amiable: on ſhe came;
Grace was in all her ſteps, Heav'n in her eye,
In every geſture dignity and love:
Yet innocence and virgin modeſty;
Her virtue, and the conſcience of her worth
That wou'd be woo'd, and not unſought be won,
Not obvious, not obtruſive, but retir'd,
The more deſireable; or, to ſay all,
Nature herſelf, though pure of ſinful thought,
Wrought in her ſo, that ſeeing me ſhe turn'd:
I follow'd her: ſhe what was honour knew,
And with obſequious majeſty approv'd
My pleaded reaſon: to the nuptial bower
I led her bluſhing like the morn.
Yet not her outſide form ſo fair, nor aught
So much delights me, as thoſe graceful acts,
Thoſe thouſand decencies, that daily flow
From all her words and actions, mix'd with love
And ſweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of mind, or in us both one ſoul;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair.

Milton's Par. Loſt.

I have enlarged more particularly on the conduct and behaviour of women, becauſe the faults and imperfections in their education may be more eaſily remedied; as it is not ſo neceſſarily expoſed to the corruption of the world, as the edu-

education of men. A boy is ſent to ſchool, where he inſenſibly catches the manners of his ſchool-fellows; and he is afterwards of neceſſity thrown ſo much into life, that, in ſpite of all the caution of his parents, he will be led by the example, and influenced by the principles, of thoſe with whom he converſes. But the ſtate of a girl is more confined and dependent; her education lies entirely under the eyes of her parents; and whatſoever blemiſhes or defects are found therein, may therefore be juſtly charged to their account. But, as there are in the male ſex alſo faults and imperfections ſufficient to be taken notice of, whether they are the reſult of their education, or the works of their own ingenuity and induſtry, I ſhall take the liberty to make ſome remarks upon their conduct and way of life.

The preſent mode of education is ſo elegant and expenſive, and the extravagance of young men is grown to ſuch an exceſs, that many a youth, who is ſent to the univerſity, or placed out in any other liberal and genteel ſituation of life, will expend as much as would formerly have afforded a ſupport to a whole family. They create ſo many wants, and multiply the neceſſaries of life to ſuch a degree, that, even at their firſt ſetting out in the world, they require as ample a proviſion, as their forefathers would have thought a full recompence for the pains

pains and labour of many years, and a decent competence in the decline of life. The vaſt ſums which are ſquandered away at coffee-houſes, taverns, theatres, and other places of public reſort, that are moſt ingeniouſly calculated for the waſte both of time and money, plainly ſhew us, that pleaſure and diſſipation, and the fatigue and buſineſs of doing nothing, fill up the meaſure of modiſh young men's lives. There is ſcarce any one, who makes any pretenſions to the character of a man of faſhion, who does not digeſt his exceſs and extravagance into ſo regular a plan, that you will ſeldom fail to meet him at ſtated times at the ſame aſſemblies, or places of reſort, on each returning day: cuſtom makes the frequenting amuſements too familiar to him to be avoided, whilſt it robs him of the power of enjoying them, and leaves him to wander round and round in the maze of pleaſure, without being able to find any end thereof. By flying from one diverſion to another, he renders his life one continued ſcene of paſtime and amuſement, and bars up every acceſs to his mind againſt thought and reflection: the noiſe of mirth, and the diſſipation of joy, hurry him ſo far beyond Religion's call, or the voice of Reaſon, that, like the *deaf adder, he ſtoppeth his ears, and refuſeth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely.** Thus he paſſeth his days, purſuing the deluſions

* Pſalm lviii. ver. 4. and 5.

of fancy, inſtead of the delights of reaſon; nor does he ſee, that pleaſure is vanity, until he feels, that it is vexation of ſpirit: for, whatever may be the imaginary end which men of gaiety propoſe to themſelves, yet miſery is the real event of their purſuits; and Plato hath given mankind the moſt ſtriking warning againſt the fatal tendency of pleaſure, by ſtyling it, *The bait of evils*.

Nay, ſo prevalent is the love of variety in all things, that it is difficult to ſay what is fixed and permanent; and almoſt every day brings forth ſo many new refinements even in outward carriage and behaviour, that the well-bred man of the laſt year is quite out of date; and finds himſelf utterly unable to go through the various evolutions of addreſs and politeneſs, without having a *maſter of the ceremonies* conſtantly at his elbow. Dreſs is ſo large an article both of ſtudy and expence, that whoſoever wiſhes to diſtinguiſh himſelf in the *beau monde*, by following the faſhion through all its changes and varieties, muſt ſet as little value on his money, as on his time and attention. I have not yet been able to learn, who was the author of that happy connection of the *noſegay* and *a pair of boots*; or who that *Atlas* of the *bon ton*, that firſt bore ſuch a prepoſterous *load of hair*, which now hangs, like *a bale of goods*, upon the *Macchérone*'s ſhoulders; and which (in order to ſupport its weight) obliges them to carry themſelves like a ſet of puny and effeminate

ticket-

ticket-porters. Theſe inventions have undoubtedly the greater degree of merit, as they lay ſo far beyond the bounds of nature, and deviate ſo much from every idea that we can poſſibly frame of gracefulneſs. However, I cannot help adviſing theſe *ſlender gentlemen* to conſider how ill ſuch burthens are ſuited to the *delicacy of their frame*; and, according to *Horace*'s rule,

Verſare diu, quid ferre recuſent,
Quid valeant humeri.

But I fear it is impoſſible to frame any images ſufficiently ſtrong to repreſent to them their own abſurdity: *Manticæ quod in tergo eſt non vident*; nor do they ſeem to know, that the literal meaning of the word *Maccherone* is *a blockhead*;* and that, however they themſelves may interpret it, it is yet underſtood in this ſenſe by the reſt of mankind. Some, it muſt be acknowledged, have ſucceeded in this character even to admiration; but it is ſurely a great pity to ſee ſo many others aiming at it, without the leaſt proſpect of ſucceſs. I muſt therefore take the liberty to tell them, that the character of a *Maccherone* is not eaſily ſupported; and that it requires certain diſtinguiſhing peculiarities of perſon, behaviour, and ſentiment, which it is not the lot of every one to be bleſt with. It was an ob-

* See *Maccherone*, *Barretti*'s Italian dictionary.

ſervation of a man, who knew the world extreme-ly well, that

A finiſh'd fool muſt be a fool of parts.

And it is therefore the moſt conſummate pitch of vanity, for any man to think himſelf *a finiſhed fool*, unleſs he hath both a natural turn for the character, and is endowed with thoſe qualifications and accompliſhments that belong to it.

The gayer part of young men uſually devote that ſhare of their time, which is unoccupied by pleaſures of another ſort, to gallantry and amour: nay, ſome of them carry on a kind of *carnal warfare* on ſuch diſhonourable terms, that, not contented with making lawful *prizes*, they are conſtantly roaming abroad for *forage*; *plundering* private families, and *leading captive ſilly women*. But, whatever ſervice they may do to their own party, by enriching them with their ſpoils, yet I cannot help looking upon them as a kind of *privy conſpirators*; and I think, that their lives ought to be forfeited to the ſtate: for I do not ſee, why *crimen læſæ virtutis* ſhould not be deemed *treaſon*, as well as *crimen læſæ Majeſtatis*.

But, as the fair have no legal ſecurity or protection againſt the baſe deſigns of theſe men: ſince their innocence may be betrayed to ruin by fraud and artifice, as well as compelled by force:

force: the utmoſt that we can do, is to warn them of their danger, by laying open the wicked aims of vicious men, that they may guard againſt them, nor ſuffer their eaſy credulity to be wrought upon to their diſappointment or undoing: and for this purpoſe I ſhall adopt the words of Metaſtaſio, which both contain the moſt ſtriking admonitions, and may alſo ſpeak more forcibly to the minds of women, as they were the words of an unhappy fair one, who ſpoke from experience; who had herſelf believed, and was forſaken.

Imparate, imparate
Ineſperte donzelle: ecco lo ſtile
De' luſinghieri amanti: ognun vi chiama
Suo ben, ſua vita, e ſuo teſoro: ognun
Giura, che a voi penſando
Vaneggia il di; veglia le notti: han l'arte
Di lagrimar, d'impallidir: talvolta
Par che ſu gli occhi voſtri
Voglian morir fra gli amoroſi affanni:
Guardatevi da lor: ſon tutti inganni.

Metaſtaſio L'Olimpiade.

Learn, unexperienc'd virgins, learn from me;
Behold the practice of deceitful men!
Each calls you ſtill his life, his ſoul, his treaſure;
Each ſwears, the dear remembrance of your charms
Beguiles the day, and waſtes the midnight hours:
All arts are theirs; they can turn pale, and weep,
Before your ſight ſeem ready to expire;
Believe them not—they are diſſemblers all.

Hoole's Tranſlation.

There

There is another ſort of young men who ſeem to have notions rather more ſerious, though not much more honourable; and who, amidſt all the gaiety of their earlier years, do vouchſafe to entertain ſome diſtant thoughts of matrimony; and after having made the tour of the world, and nearly exhauſted both their conſtitutions and their fortunes in its pleaſures and diſſipations, will condeſcend to devote the ſcanty remains of each to marriage; and are contented to retreat with any women, whoſe fortunes are ample enough to recompenſe them for that ſacrifice, which they ſo graciouſly make of themſelves, in compaſſion to thoſe deſtitute fair ones, who, having the moſt hearty deteſtation of the appellation of an *Old Maid*, are willing to purchaſe the name of *Wife* at any rate.

As to thoſe, whoſe ſphere of action in the gay world is more extenſive, by what titles ſoever they are diſtinguiſhed, whether *Fine Gentlemen*, *Men of the World*, of the *Bon Ton*, or *Macheroni*; a great part of them at leaſt make matrimony the ſubject of their ſcorn and ridicule; and ſeem to to think, that ſacrificing the pleaſures of a ſingle life to the controul of matrimony, is much like quitting the free poſſeſſion and enjoyment of a plentiful eſtate, to ſpend the remainder of their days in gaol. They deem it a ſtate of confinement and reſtraint, fit only for thoſe dull ſouls, who jog on in

in the purſuit of happineſs through the old road of natural affections; but ill ſuited to the freer ſpirit of men of faſhion, who, deſpiſing ſuch low and narrow conſiderations, chooſe to rove at large in ſearch of all the various gratifications they can meet; and, being above all prudential fears and cautions, plunge boldly on, to the ruin of their health, and of their fortunes. They could ill ſupport the expences of matrimony, they ſay, when they expend all their income in a ſingle ſtate; thus complaining of difficulties and obſtructions of their own making: and how ill they are qualified for the ſtate of matrimony, may be ſeen from many ſad examples of married men's inconſtancy and extravagance. A faſhionable marriage is now-a-days little elſe than an agreement between the parties, to have as little connexion with each other as is poſſible under the ſame roof; to enter into a voluntary ſeparation of deſires and purſuits; and to live upon terms of that Goſpel-like charity, where *the left hand knoweth not what the right doeth.**

The preſent ſcarcity of proviſions is, in a great meaſure, charged to the encouragement given to the breed of horſes, and the number of them that are kept by people of all ſtations: and I believe the preſent ſcarcity of virtue and ſobriety amongſt modern young men, may be as juſtly aſcribed to the like encouragement given to the breed of women of

* St. Matthew, ch. vi. ver. 3.

of the town, and to the many miſtreſſes that are kept by moſt men of the gay world. Nay, this vice is ſo prevailing, that it ſeems to have been a part of their education;† and I am inclined to ſuſpect, that many a youth, from an early inattention in reading his *grammar*, hath miſtaken *pellex* for *ſupellex*, and hath accordingly conſtrued it a neceſſary piece of *houſehold furniture*. What multitudes of looſe women patrole up and down the ſtreets of London with wanton looks and looſe geſtures, and, humming a tune with a counterfeit air of chearfulneſs, decoy the innocent into their dens, and rifle both their virtue and their pockets! Others take their ſtands at certain parts of the town, in hopes of chance cuſtomers; and will aſk you to go and drink a glaſs of wine with them, with the ſame aſſurance and importunity, that a butcher's wife in the market cries, *What d'ye buy, ſir? What d'ye pleaſe to buy?* Nay, how many women of profligate characters find admittance into places of public reſort, and (to the ſhame of the age be it ſpoken) receive countenance and ſupport from the men, in inſolent triumph over the modeſt part of the ſex! In ſhort, Vice hath now taken off her veil, and goeth barefaced: ſhe hath no longer the modeſty

† Utinam liberorum noſtrorum mores non ipſi perderemus: pudenda dictu ſpectantur: noſtras amicas vident: diſcunt hæc miſeri antequam ſciant vitia eſſe.

Quintilian. Lib. i. Cap. 2.

modeſty *to walk in darkneſs, like the peſtilence, but is an open deſtruction, that waſteth at noon day.*†

I ſhall now make ſome few obſervations on the luxurious and extravagant taſte of the times in general; and there is leſs occaſion to dwell long on this head, as we have already ſeen many ſtriking inſtances thereof, in what has been ſaid above.

It may perhaps be thought a narrow idea, to attempt to ſet bounds to the towering ſpirit of invention: but I muſt confeſs, that it ſeems to have reached the topmoſt round; and every ſpecies of luxury and refinement, which either our own art and ingenuity can ſuggeſt, or the moſt faithful imitation can borrow from our neighbours, hath already been adopted. Nay, we have been ſuch apt ſcholars, that we have far excelled our maſters, and have nothing left to learn; and the wonders of our invention have ſo far ſurpaſſed every idea we could have framed concerning the extent of its powers, that we may be ſaid to have outdone ourſelves.

Arte laboratæ veſtes, oſtroque ſuperbo;
Ingens argentum menſis.

Virg. Æn. i. 64.

Lucent genialibus altis
Aurea fulcra toris, epulæq. ante ora paratæ
Regifico luxu.

Æneid. vi. 604.

† Pſalm xci. ver. 6.

Nay, ſo extenſive is the encouragement that is given to every mode of expence, that the man who can deviſe new pleaſures, or open a freſh paſſage to profuſion and ruin, meets with a reward almoſt as great as if he had *diſcovered the longitude*. Such is the neglect of every thing that is ſerious and beneficial to mankind, that mental qualifications are made to give place to ſuperficial accompliſhments; and every grave and uſeful ſcience is ſo far ſuperſeded by the arts of vanity and pleaſure, that a man may toil on in a regular profeſſion, and ſtarve in the cauſe of religion, or the good of his country, whilſt thoſe who invent, or excell in ſuch arts as are prejudicial to both, may quickly riſe to opulence. The poor *curate*'s weekly pay exhales in the *maccherone*'s daily *noſegay*; a *fidler*'s or a *ſinger*'s income rivals the ſalary of a *judge*; and a few ſtrides of *Mademoiſelle Heinel* far outſtrip all the ten-and-ſixpenny motions that the *young barriſter* has ever made. In ſhort, the ſuperfluities of life are now become (in the ideas of modiſh men) its neceſſaries: they build them houſes, without living in them; frequent amuſements, without enjoying them; beggar themſelves and families to appear rich; and make themſelves fools in the eye of reaſon, that they may be thought to have taſte and diſcernment in the eyes of the world.

However,

However, theſe modes of extravagance and diſſipation are but ſo many innocent abſurdities, when compared with other more deſperate purſuits. There is a vice of that gigantic magnitude, at whoſe ſight all leſſer vices *hide their diminiſhed heads*; which can, at one ſtroke, level to the ground dominion, wealth, and power, and (as it were by the force of magic) at an inſtant ſhift the ſcene from the palace to the gaol; which conveys away property without the forms of law, ejects a man from his eſtate in the twinkling of an eye, and makes ſucceſſion ſo quick and ſudden, that one may truly ſay,

——————————*Hæres*
Hæredem alterius velut unda ſupervenit undam.
Hor.

There is a certain well-known manſion, which, it is ſincerely to be wiſhed, was farther removed from the ſeat of royalty, that it might not betray how feeble are the rays even of a ſovereign's good example, *Veſtibulum ante ipſum*. Here the arch-fiend hath his principal reſidence; here he holds his horrid rites; and feaſteth continually on the deſtruction of his votaries.

Noctes atq; dies patet atri janua Ditis.
Virg. Æn. vi.

But it would be too bold an attempt to aim at the deſcription of its myſteries. Who can tell

the various implements of ruin, the *pereundi mille figuræ!* With what colours can he paint the miniſters of vengeance glaring deſtruction at each other! What imagery can ſpeak the deformity of nature, whilſt every paſſion of the ſoul is on the rack! the trembling anxiety of hope, the chilling damp of fear, fluctuating between the deſperate alternative of impending affluence or beggary! the wild and pitileſs exultation of the ſucceſsful, and the huge affliction and diſmay of the fallen! ſome, like *raging waves, foaming out their own ſhame* in frantic oaths and execrations; others riveted to earth in the deep ſilence of unutterable deſpair.—Behold that wretched victim, creeping on homeward reluctantly, to pour into the ears of his fond wife the bleeding tale of beggary and ruin—mark how he ſtarts!—it is a thought that ſtings to madneſs.

—æſtuat ingens
Imo in corde pudor, mixtoq; inſania luctu.
Virg. Æn.

Obſerve the cruel ſpoiler, fluſhed with the gain and glory of conqueſt—envy him not—the ſharp reflection, that the miſery and ruin of others hath wrought his greatneſs, will ſoon daſh with confuſion the pride of victory, and level the conqueror with the vanquiſhed. But I ſhall not purſue this faint ſhadow of a deſcription any further, leſt the vain attempt ſhould only ſerve

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to leſſen the horror of theſe works of darkneſs, which dare defy the moſt poignant venom of ſatire, and reſiſt the authority and influence even of *royalty* itſelf. It is ſufficient to ſay, that were this *helliſh manſion*, with all its various ſcenes of deſtruction and deſolation, ſuddenly diſcloſed to the view of any rational man, he would ſtand aghaſt,

Non ſecus, ac ſi qua penitus vi terra dehiſcens
Infernas reſeret ſedes, et regna recludat
Pallida dîis inviſa; ſuperque immanè barathrum
Cernatur, trepidentq; immiſſo lumine manes.

Virgil.

and, being ſtruck with horror at ſo unnatural, ſo deformed a ſight, he might juſtly cry out, (in the words which Adam ſpeaks to the archangel Michael, whilſt in a viſion the future ſins and miſeries of humanity are preſented to him)

O what are theſe!
Death's miniſters, not men, who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thouſand fold the ſin of him who ſlew
His brother: for of whom ſuch maſſacre
Make they but of their brethren, men of men!

Miiton's Par. Loſt, xi. 675.

Even the *City* hath learnt the arts of ruin, and underſtands the uſe of money ſo perfectly, that

that it employs it in a thouſand deſtructive ſhapes. The ſudden and rapid accumulation of fortunes in *trade* is a ſtriking proof of that unbounded and dangerous *credit* which is given; and which enables a man to trade for twenty times his worth; or, in other words, prompts him to graſp at ſudden affluence, by ſtaking the fortunes of his friends and relations: if his deſperate purſuits ſucceed, he himſelf alone reaps the profit and the glory; if they are defeated, he falls with all the dignity of an antient hero, ſurrounded with the ſacrifices of his deareſt friends and companions. Now to a plain rational man, who hath not yet acquired that large way of thinking, which the principle of *credit* aims to countenance and ſupport, it may perhaps ſound ſomewhat like iniquity, for any one thus to *ſport and play* with the fortunes of others; to expoſe all thoſe who have confided in his honour and integrity to the extreme hazard of ruin and miſery, even for the moſt diſtant chance of enriching himſelf; or to ſink his boſom friend before his eyes, only to *buoy himſelf up on the tide of credit* for the ſpace of an hour. But, how much ſoever theſe practices may ſhock any private impartial man, yet they are too often regarded with an eye of indulgence by many of the trading part of the world, who, I apprehend, being thoroughly ſenſible of that powerful influence, which the love of gain hath over themſelves, do

the more readily admit it as an excuſe for the mal-practices of others; and are ever ſtudious to ſupport and juſtify the following favourite maxim:

O! cives, cives, quærenda pecunia primùm;
Virtus poſt nummos. —

Horat.

And that the abovementioned practices are often regarded with ſome degree of favour, is obvious, from many well-known inſtances, where freſh credit and countenance have been immediately given to thoſe who have failed, with all the aggravating circumſtances of their having reduced many poor families to ruin and beggary; and who are ſo far from entertaining even the moſt diſtant thought of diſcharging their debts, that they live on with all the thoughtleſſneſs and extravagance, and face the world with the air of as much eaſe and confidence, as if they enjoyed the fulleſt, and moſt independent fortunes.

I ſhall not enlarge on various other baſe practices, of ſporting with the diſtreſſes and ſickneſſes of their fellow creatures, opening *policies on their lives*, *inſuring* the moſt trivial events, and even circumſtances ſo wide and excentric, that nothing but the moſt wanton and licentious pitch of gambling could ſingle them out. Theſe are yet only *retail* modes of ruin: a larger and more extenſive ſcene demands

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our attention; where men *deal in deſtruction by the wholeſale*, and that ſo liberally, that (like the great hero *Drawcanſir* in the *Rehearſal*) they often *ſlay at one ſtroke both friend and foe*. When I have occaſionally paſſed through the *Alley*, and taken a view of *Jo—th—n's*, that *bellua multorum capitum*, (for ſo I muſt call it, for want of a better name) I have reflected with myſelf, that the appellation of *bulls* and *bears*, by which they have been diſtinguiſhed, is much too mild for thoſe monſters; for we are told, that

—Saevis inter ſe convenit urſis.

And Juvenal ſays,

Cognatis parcit maculis ſimilis fera.

But a brute with reaſon is ten times more ſavage than a brute without it; and the artificial paſſions are ſo much more craving than the natural ones, that the *auri ſacra fames* whets their appetites with a more than brutal keenneſs, and makes them prey on their own ſpecies without remorſe.

Nor is the ſpirit of luxury and extravagance confined only to the faſhionable or wealthy part of mankind; it affects all ranks and orders of men: ſuch is the fatal influence of bad example, that the loweſt degrees of people will imitate the vices and follies

follies of their ſuperiors. The poor, as well as the rich, have their ſeveral places of reſort, which are moſt ingeniouſly calculated for pleaſure and expence; and, leaving their children to hunger and nakedneſs, often ſquander away a week's ſubſiſtence in the diſſipation of a day. There is ſcarce any part of the metropolis, that hath not ſome adjoining ſcene of amuſement: *Mile-End* hath its aſſembly; *Spital-Fields*, its routs; *Southwark*, its grotto-gardens; and even *Hockley in the Hole*, its *Pantheon*.

Now, when ſuch is the general luxury and extravagance of the age, that there are few families who do not live beyond the compaſs of their fortunes or incomes; when their ſons are plunged too deep into the pleaſures and diſſipations of the world, to brook the reſtraints of matrimony, or the regularity of domeſtic life; when their daughters are led aſtray, by the bias of a wrong education, from the natural grace and ſimplicity of woman; when they are taught to dethrone the genuine affections of their hearts, by the uſurpation of foreign and artificial deſires; to cover the ſoftneſs and delicacy of their ſex with the diſguiſe of pride and affectation; and to practiſe the arts of ſpreading the net, and leading men into captivity: when we have before our eyes ſuch ſad examples of unhappineſs in the married ſtate, ariſing from the levity and vanity of women, and from the inconſtancy and debauchery of men; can it be matter of wonder, that matrimony ſhould

be in a ſtate of ſtagnation? *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots?*§ Will young men, who have lived in the gay world, and taſted pleaſure in every ſhape, and amidſt all its changes and varieties, retreat at once from the wild and unbounded range of exceſs and extravagance, into the narrow limits of domeſtic œconomy; or bear the reſtraint of regular hours, temperate meals, and that conſtancy which is enjoined by the matrimonial vows? Or, will the young beauty, who hath launched out into the gaieties of life, whoſe eyes have been dazzled with the glare of admiration, and her ears filled with the enchantments of flattery; will ſhe, I ſay, reſign the adulation of the world, and the addreſſes of a multitude? Will ſhe withdraw her heart from the pleaſures of life? Will ſhe call back the wanderer home, and fix its volatile ſpirit of gaiety? Will ſhe reſtrain the glances of her eye; controul the power of her charms; and centre all her arts of attraction and allurement in the ſcanty aim of pleaſing her huſband? Will ſhe quit her gaudy tinſel dreſs for the plain and modeſt habit of a wife; and condeſcend to look to the ways of her houſehold, to eat the bread of carefulneſs and frugality? Theſe indeed would be ſuch wonderful events, as one can hardly think will ever come to paſs; and yet, the cauſe of matrimony depends on their accompliſhment: for give me leave to aſk, what will become of thoſe num-

§ Jeremiah, ch. xiii. ver. 23.

numberleſs young women, who, by means of an income dependent only on their fathers lives, are ſupported in ſplendor and dreſs, and ride in their carriages? who, on the death of their fathers, would be ſo far from having ſufficient to feed this ſpirit of vanity and extravagance, that they will hardly have wherewithal to ſupply them with the common neceſſaries of life; and muſt either be contented to bid adieu to the gratifications and amuſements of the world, or if they will ſtill purſue the pleaſures of life, their virtue will be in danger of paying the price of them. And yet there are few ſuch women, I believe, who have not neglected opportunities of being ſettled in the world with a decent maintenance, and a tolerable ſhare of the common comforts of life. But pride is often its own puniſhment, (as virtue is its own reward) and commonly exalts women, only to make their fall the greater: for men of a ſober caſt, and moderate circumſtances, are afraid of being rejected as lovers by their pride, or of being ruined as huſbands by their extravagance: and the gayer and richer part of mankind, at whom alone they *ſet their caps*, (thoſe weapons of female warfare) are uſually too much hackneyed in the ways of the world, to be made captive; and are apt to counterplot the attacks of the fair upon their fortunes, by attempts on their virtue: and it is often ſeen, that an haſty and eager paſs at the antagoniſt,

unguards and lays open ſome vital part of one's own perſon.

The luxury and vicioufneſs of a nation have a natural tendency to diſcourage matrimony: nay, this effect is mentioned even as one of the curſes of God upon the wicked and diſobedient ſons of Iſrael; for we are told, that *when the Almighty was wroth with his inheritance, their maidens were not given to marriage*, Pſalm xviii. 63. And indeed I think that this nation, which hath been heretofore *favoured of heaven ſo highly*, ſeems to have forfeited the favour and protection of God, and to be given up to its own inventions: and miſerable are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; whoſe improvements ſerve only to feed the ſpirit of pride and luxury; whoſe inventions are chiefly fruitful in the arts of their own deſtruction, and whoſe conqueſts defeat and undo themſelves. And, as ſlow of heart as men may be to believe their own danger, yet I fear that we ſhall ſhortly ſee in many families that alarm and anxiety ſpoken of in ſcripture: *The father waketh for the daughter, when no man knoweth, and the care of her taketh away ſleep; when ſhe is young, leſt ſhe paſs away the flower of her age, and in her virginity, leſt ſhe ſhould be defiled.* Eccleſ. xlii. 9. 10.

As the promotion of matrimony is a grand object to every nation, and the preſent ſtagnation thereof

thereof is a melancholy conſideration in every light; one cannot but wonder, that there are not ſome ſteps taken towards the remedying an evil, which is now become ſo common and prevailing. There were, it is true, ſome laudable attempts made a few years ago, by a certain *U—ver—ty*, towards the encouragement of matrimony; and, without doubt, it gave the world much pleaſure to find that wiſe and learned body engaged in the ſupport of a cauſe that ſeems ſo much deſerted by the reſt of mankind. A plan was concerted for ſetting *fellows* of *colleges* free from the obligation of *celibacy*, and permitting them to enter into the *married ſtate*; and it is probable, that it might have been carried into execution, had it not met with ſuch a powerful oppoſition from certain perſons, who were ſo frozen up by a collegiate life, that they were too cold and dull to take a part in the intereſt of the female world. But, when one conſiders what a powerful and happy effect ſuch a ſupply of fit and able men muſt have upon ſociety, who are now locked up from uſe and ſervice; and alſo how much more advantageous to the public thoſe ſeats of education muſt be, when changed into *nurſeries of babes and ſucklings*, which at preſent are only the *ſeminaries* of *dry learning* and *barren philoſophy*; one cannot help thinking, that a plan, ſo highly beneficial to this whole kingdom, was well worthy the attention of the *Legiſlature:* for we

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are told, that the *ſtrength of a nation is in the multitude of the people, and that young children are even like arrows in the hand of the giant*; and I am confident, that was the above-mentioned matrimonial plan to take place, our *colleges* would ſoon become ſo many mighty props of national power and glory; nor could their *fellows* be any longer deemed uſeleſs to ſociety, whoſe *wives were like the fruitful vines upon the walls of their houſes, and their children like the olive-branches round about their tables.* Pſalm cxxviii. 3. 4.

It is alſo credibly reported, that there was a plan laid ſome time ago for a marriage act; according to which, young women were to have been left at their own diſpoſal at the age of ſixteen, and young men at eighteen years of age; which plainly ſhews, that it was thought to be the beſt expedient for the promotion of matrimony, to leave young folks open to the influence of their own affections, before the pride of life had corrupted the ſimplicity of nature, or the bias of a wrong education had taught them to value appearances rather than realities; and turned them aſide from the plain road of happineſs, to purſue its ſhadow through bye paths and crooked ways.

In a word, the *luxury* and *extravagance* of *the age* is the bane of *matrimony*; and the diſorder hath

hath run to ſuch an height of malignity, that there is the greateſt reaſon to think it muſt prove fatal, unleſs ſome *empiric in politics* ſhould ſtrike out a method of *inoculating frugality*.

There is indeed an old preſcription, which, though it is ſomewhat out of date, (there being a faſhion in phyſic as well as in other things) I ſhall nevertheleſs tranſcribe, as it ſtrikes at the root of the malady, and tends to work a thorough change in the conſtitution.

Quæ virtus, et quanta, boni, ſit vivere parvo
Diſcite, non inter lances, menſaſq; nitentes
Cum ſtupet inſanis acies fulgoribus, et cum
Acclinis falſis animus meliora recuſat.

Hor.

What, and how great the virtue and the art,
To live on little with a chearful heart, &c.

Pope.

F I N I S.